

Operation Kokkuri



Translator: Remonwater Thanks to Usterm for this sweet new banner on my site. Thanks to him I can now have heart attacks whenever I visit my own website. Speaking of hearts, hearts will soon be added to the banner as well, not sure when though. Still not sure if I want to have all the TL text for these novels on my site, so I think I'll keep them in documents to be safe.

Finished this as soon as possible because it did not have as much Rem as I expected, though it was a fun read at times. That is what I get for only skimming. Also have some important matters to take care of in the next few days, so I wanted to finish this before that. Not much else to say, but I guess I will once again note that I am deeply grateful for having her as my sole motivation. Maybe more tanpenshuu after this

The hall is covered in tension.

They watched over the situation, nobody being able to take a breath. There were three people around the table in the center exchanging looks at each other. These three people were Subaru, who was sweating from the forehead, Beatrice, who had a wrinkled brow from her frowning, and then Puck, who quivered his ears, listening attentively.

Emilia and Rem had serious looks on their face as they watched over the situation with eyes, indicating that they were anxious and confused.

However, Subaru had no composure to take care of their anxiety right now.

[Subaru: Sup with that pale face, Beatrice? If you strain yourself so much, you'd even make Hollows want to run away.]

[Beatrice: You really just said that, I suppose. I'm not straining myself. There's no reason at all for me to get serious. Look at yourself. Your nostrils are flaring.]

[Puck: Now now, let's calm down you two. It's only a game, you shouldn't get so serious.]

Beatrice responded to Subaru's provocation with a rageful smile that didn't suit her childish face. Puck was the only one that stayed composed upon seeing the two rivaling each other with spirit while touching his whiskers, brushing the situation off as the usual.

[Beatrice: You're not wrong, Nii-cha.However, this is more of a match, rather than just a game. I musn't lose to the likes of humans.]

[Puck: Betty sure is an obstinate person. How about it, Subaru. If you can be the adult here this one time and give.....]

[Subaru: Puck.]

Puck tried to calm those two down as an outsider. Subaru cut him off and continued to speak with a serious face as Puck tilted his face slightly to the side in doubt.

[Subaru: —If you're gonna talk about giving in and not giving in, you should untense your tail first.]

[—]

[Subaru: If you can't do that, then you're no different than me and Beako. Don't you think so?]

[Puck: Jeez, Subaru sure is a troubling one too.....]

Puck folded his little arms and let out a sigh in response to Subaru's low toned questioning. After that, the spirit that had an appearance of a cat looked straight through Subaru with his round eyes.

[Puck: —It seems like I also have to play against you guys with all I've got.]

An overwhelmingly intimidative wind blows against him. It seemed as if Subaru was going to bend backwards from the feeling of oppression. However, he frantically puts up with that wind, lets out a fearless laugh, and then looked at his two opponents.

[Emilia: Why has it comes to this.....]

Inside of the devastating wind of that decision, Emilia whispers these words, seemingly with chagrin, as she watches over those 3 individuals.

Emilia puts her hand on her chest. Her blueish purple eyes were filled with gloom. To her side, Rem gently placed her hand onto Emilia's slender shoulder. Rem shakes her head at Emilia, who looked over her shoulder.

[Rem: They cannot be stopped. We can no longer do anything but watch.]

[Emilia: Why is it like this. They were having that much fun up until a little while ago, and yet.....]

[Rem: Because they have something they cannot give up—]

In response to Emilia sinking into sorrow, Rem grumbled weakly, seemingly doing so with a sigh. When Emilia opened her eyes wide in astonishment from hearing that sound, Rem let out a nod while gazing at the three individuals.

[Rem: Subaru-kun and the others surely have something they cannot give up. Thus, occasionally they have to be like that and collide with each otherperhaps.]

[Emilia: That's why they collide with each other like that?]

[Rem: I think so.]

With that, Rem did not look away from the three people with serious expressions at the table. Seeing Rem do that, Emilia also put her hands together to pray and closed her eyes.

She prays, "I pray that these three come to a conclusion without hurting anyone".

As for who she was praying to, in this situation it would be—

[Emilia: —Please, Kokkuri-sama.]

Emilia calls out a name of an unfamiliar spirit and quietly offered her prayer. They surround the table. The three individuals facing each other—those three spread the surrounded table with white paper. On it were several characters and digits, along with a single coin placed on it. Those three individuals put hands and a tail on the coin and continued to glare at each other endlessly. They included their prayers with faces that looked so serious that they would even disturb a descended god and—

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[Subaru: Just something that came to my mind, but how do people treat ghosts here?]

Suddenly, Subaru asks this question at the place where they sat together after breakfast.

All the members of the mansion gathered together. Time for exchanging words was valuable at this one place. As of the other day, topics would generally be talked about at this time—topics being things like the matter of Rem being given a whole day off.

Today was no exception. Everyone looked at Subaru, who let out a meager question.

[Ram: Rem, Rem. Subaru said something again.]

[Rem: Nee-sama, Nee-sama. That's something that makes him Subaru-kun.]

[Beatrice: I don't see that, I suppose. Clearly it's just him being a burden with a troubling matter.]

Beatrice's followed up with the interaction of the sisters, which was an interaction he was already completely familiar with, as she let out a sigh.

[Roswaal: You've come up with something interesting again, huh.]

This person sitting in the seat of highest honor opposes the group of girls' reactions and clapped his hands cheerfully.

He had clown make-up and wore a striking outfit, along with a personality of tending to say eccentric remarks. He was an oddball who had a type of perception for everything, differing from the ordinary person. This was Roswaal L Mathers.

[Roswaal: Subaru-kun brings in a fresh topic everyday, so it doesn't get boring. Wearisome days prevent people from growing up. I've also been taught that stagnation is the most abominable offense out there.]

[Subaru: It's not that big of a deal, but from now on give me some hope for my growth.]

Subaru said words that couldn't be labeled as cynicism or his true thoughts and roughly looked over the people in the dining room.

[Subaru: So going back to my initial question, I'd like to talk about ghosts. Well, to be honest, I'm a type of viewer that doesn't really believe in them, so I've been set on ignoring the summer spirit TV shows.]

Subaru was not the type to be afraid of psychic phenomena, though he did put aside his previous declaration.

With this, Subaru, who was unexpectedly a realist, was negative towards occult phenomena. He could not believe in things without having real experiences of them. That was his theory. It was a pretty typical idea for young men of the present.

[Puck: You were brought into a different world, so I'll believe you. Also, I've seen Kappa when I was little, so I'll believe in that too. To the side of a dirty

river, a middle aged man with dark green skin was washing dishes. That was Kappa.]

[Emilia: Umm, Puck? I don't really get what Kappa is, but.....well, what's this ghost thing Subaru is talking about in the first place?]

Puck's observation, something that nobody believed because it happened when he was young, was a misfire even in this different world.

Subaru had his shoulders dropped, but the person who made a displeased face at him was Emilia, the person who sat in the seat next to him. She put one of her fingers on her face and tilts her head in a lovely manner.

[Emilia: I've never heard about ghosts, but.....are they some type of sweet candy or something?]

[Subaru: Your anticipations for dessert came out bluntly, huh. However, you don't know about ghosts? Seriously? I think of them as spiritual type of things—well I wonder if that gives you an image.]

[Emilia: Ghosts, Kappa, Renkon.....are these words that only Subaru knows of again?]

[Subaru: Putting the first two things aside, the last one is definitely something I saw in a bento.]

The unfamiliar words caused Emilia to have a troubled face. Subaru judged that it seemed that she truly had clue about what those words meant and turned around to Rem.

[Subaru: Rem do you know what ghosts are? They are beings that have translucent bodies, wear white clothes, and fly into the sky while having a triangular decoration attached to their heads]

[Rem: Nope, unfortunately I also don't know about them.If I come across a person like that, I'd be scared.]

[Ram: I agree with Rem. Freaks who fly in the air? Haa, I'd get knocked out if I was half asleep and saw one, Barusu.]

[Subaru: Lately I've been catching sight of that Roswaal-san flying into the air. What do you think of that?]

[Ram: He does something that an ordinary person can't do at a moment's notice, so I think it's precious. Barusu, you show some respect too]

In response to Ram shamelessly honoring the Head, Subaru becomes weary and looked at Roswaal, the person in question. He lets out a shrug in response to his glance and

[Roswaal: That expectant look troubles me. Alright, guess I can hold you next time and we can fly into the sky together. Would that satisfy you?]

[Subaru: Didn't understand a single thing you say. That's what I've assessed.]

[Roswaal: I wasn't serious. Moreover, ghosts and spirits.....those things aren't talked about much in Lugnica. As far as I know, those words may have been used among Kararagi city-state people, perhaps. I'm also not very informed on the specifics of ghosts, but I feel like I've heard about them several times.]

[Emilia: Huh, so they say it at Kararagi. Now that I think about it, Subaru is abnormally informed on weird things. If that's the case, then it wouldn't be weird for you to be abnormally informed on Kararagi too.]

Emilia nods many times with an enlightened expression at Roswaal, who shed some of his knowledge on the topic.

On one hand Subaru was happy about Emilia's trust, but on the other he was bothered by how she treated his understanding as abnormal.

However, Subaru put that aside for now and cocked his head in puzzlement at the lack of responses around him.

In his original world, the concept of ghosts was something that was universally common knowledge, not considering about whether people believed in them or not. The idea of ancestral spirits was something that was established long ago to an extent.

The deceased and the living, bonds and spirits—that concept of life and death—these felt like things that could not be separated.

[Subaru: Ah, could it be because spirits are here? Now that I think about it, the light of the spirit you can see at night at the garden is ghost-like. It's damn ghost-like.]

[Emilia: —? You mean spirits are ghosts? I thought spirits were spirits.]

[Roswaal: No no, Emilia-sama. The ghosts and spirits Subaru-kun is talking about are the same as these things called "Hollow(Holou)".]

[——]

With the sound of a click, Subaru felt the atmosphere freeze.

Emilia stiffens with a smile at Roswaal's words. However, she was not the only one. Rem and Ram of course became firm, along with Beatrice who had an indifferent face, indicating that it was no concern of hers.

Subaru widens his eyes at the girls' reactions and asks a question to Roswaal like that.

[Subaru: Ummm, what are Hollows?]

[Roswaal: They are said to be passed away life's thoughts and regrets left behind in the world for the living, unable to return to Od Laguna, continuing to drift about in the realm of the dead.....that's where these existences are, perhaps.]

[Subaru: Ah, that's definitely a ghost. I see. So they're called Hollows, huh.]

However, contrary to the two men who understood this existence, the group of girls were greatly disturbed. Emilia's expression was especially pale. She touched Subaru's arm gently with her trembling fingers.

[Emilia: Th—the ghosts Subaru was talking about are Hollows.....?]

[Subaru: Seems like they were. But I've come to understand it thanks to that, though it's not like it's a big deal or anything.]

[Emilia: You said it's not a big deal, so why did you talk about Hollows? That's weird. Surely it's because.....I got it. Subaru saw a Hollow. You saw one in the mansion. That's why you suddenly became interested in Hollows. I don't like this. Why did you talk about it like that? If I didn't become aware of it, then I could've gone on without knowing about them. That's cruel. Subaru-kun, you idiot. So cruel. Subaru is planning on dragging us into this because he's scared himself—!]

[Subaru: Emilia-tan has quite the persecution complex.]

Emilia started to talk rapidly, violently shaking Subaru's shoulder, being unable to hold back her emotions.

Subaru manages to let out a kind smile at Emilia while being surprised by the force from her shaking his shoulder.

[Subaru: It'll be okay, calm down! Even if I were to get someone involved with damage from occult stuff, Emilia-tan would be the last one I'd involve. Beako would be the first sacrifice.]

[Beatrice: Why'd you bring me up there? I don't understand, I suppose!]

[Emilia: Really? Are you being seriously serious? You'll make Beatrice your first sacrifice?]

[Beatrice: You too. What are you saying with your confusion!? I want to beat up the both of you, I suppose.]

[Rem: That's right. I don't get this. The person that Subaru-kun should depend on first for this is me. Beatrice-sama should not be used for this!]

[Beatrice: Why must I be insulted like this!? This is shameless, I suppose!]

There was Emilia, becoming confused and speaking of choices that she'd normally be unable to speak of, and there was Beatrice, who wouldn't be quiet. When the self-recommending Rem participated in this war, the discussion turned into complete chaos.

Under these circumstances of not knowing if that chaos would settle down, Emilia looks at Subaru with wet eyes.

[Emilia: Is Subaru going to inform us on Hollows? You're gonna tell us about how you know tons of things about them. Like how you are with stars.]

[Subaru: That's not true. At best, all I know of is stuff like Okiku-san's Banchousarayashiki, where she breaks plates and had remaining regrets, Oiwa-san, who flipped out in a grudge against her husband who betrayed her, or Miminashihouichi, who had her ears torn off because she forgot to write on them.]

[Emilia: Awwa—awawawa]

[Roswaal: Subaru-kuuun. Emilia-sama is going to faint, so let's stop here.]

The frightened Emilia's cuteness caused Subaru to unconsciously get carried away with his entertainment. He gets rebuked by Roswaal and gently tapped Emilia's shoulder while having a wry smile.

[Subaru: Just kidding, just kidding. I've never seen Hollows in this mansion. The only mysterious experience I had was with Kokkuri, a once in a lifetime.....scratch that, because Hollows are unrelated to it.]

[Emilia: Bu—but Subaru.....weren't things like Kappa and Renkon talked about earlier?]

[Subaru: Kappa is a middle aged man who lives at a river with a face indicative of unhealthiness, and Renkon is a vegetable.]

He bows his head at his childhood memories. Emilia was more precious than ever right now.

It was worth it for Emilia to try her best to calm down, as her chaos was now slowly settling down. Then the Emilia who somehow managed to calm down blushes and

[Emilia: Hey, I think Subaru has the wrong idea. I don't get frightened by Hollows at all. It's just that I'm a little bad at dealing with them.]

[Subaru: By a little you mean very?]

[Emilia: A little means a little! God, Subaru you idiot! You bully!]

Emilia was angry, but she was certainly not persuasive with her words. Still continuing to calm down the angry Emilia, Subaru turns around to face Rem and the others.

[Subaru: Come to think of it, your guys' facial expressions have been tough. Could it be...?]

[Ram: What do you mean by "Could it be"? If you don't include the subject in that, then I can't understand you. Barusu, a person poor at asking questions, has missed his chance through his own foolishness. This conversation is over.]

[Subaru: If you make such a blunt response like that, then you already know the subject!]

Ram clicked her tongue at Subaru's reference, although she was three times more bitter than usual. Rem, who quietly went in front of her sister to protect her, shook her head at Subaru.

[Rem: You're wrong, Subaru-kun. Nee-sama doesn't get frightened by Hollows. However, just having these circumstances being different than not having an attack land on someone after striking.....Rem also feels the same way.]

[Subaru: You're saying I have bad chemistry in battle!? You don't have to talk with an assumption that I'd get knocked out!]

[Rem: It is Nee-sama's and my duty to fight in order to protect people. Don't worry, even if a Hollow were to appear, I would put my life on the line and protect Subaru-kun.]

[Subaru: It was just hypothetical talk, and yet the topic has come to this.]

It started out as a casual conversation, and yet it turned into a talk about readiness when faced with awfully serious moments. Unlike Emilia, who got scared from theoretical ideas, Rem and the others didn't look cute with their awareness of how they were bad at dealing with ghosts.

[Subaru: Then Beako making a sullen face means that you're scared too I guess. Are you able to go to the bathroom by yourself a night?]

[Beatrice: Cut it o—stop treating me like a young girl like that. There's no reason for me to be afraid of something suspicious like Holo in the first place, I suppose.]

[Subaru: Then why are you pissed off? Something get caught in your teeth?]

[Beatrice: Don't you anger me with something stupid!The reason why I show displeasure towards Hollows is so that I can encloud that really precious existence this way, I suppose.]

[Subaru: Really precious.....ah! So that's why...]

Subaru understood the source for Beatrice's anger and nodded his head affirmatively.

[Subaru: Spirits and ghosts give a similar feeling after all, huh. I've come to understand your irritation too.]

[Beatrice: It's irritating for the real and suspicious Hollows to look down upon all the spirits.]

Beatrice folds her arms in displeasure with a face indicating that she damaged her self-respect.

Subaru also thought of this earlier, but mistaking spirits for Hollows was a case in point that made his hypothesis probable. Or rather, perhaps Subaru was the only one who reasoned that ghosts existed because spirits did.

[Emilia: —! Then Puck is a Hollow!? Noo! Even when I believed in you!]

[Puck: You call me, then here I am. Nya nya nya nya nyaaan!What the. Lia, what's wrong? You look like you're about to cry. Who is the cause for this!? I'll show them a piece of my mind!]

[Emilia: It's your fault.]

[Puck: Damnit. I'm an idiot! Satisfied now?]

Emilia was panicking once again, but the skit of the materialized Puck had unfolded. Emilia's adeptness at using spirits was irrelevant. The differences between spirits and Hollows generally could not be understood, though Emilia was prone to getting extremely scared.

[Subaru: But it's surprising how everyone is bad with Hollow, though it seems like the meaning of bad is different in this case.]

[Roswaal: The grasp of these ghosts you're talking about and the grasp of the Hollows that we know of may be different. At the very least, we are aware of how Hollows are existences that aren't friendly with the living. Corpses moving on the battlefield, wicked thoughts that curse the living.....there are many examples like that to show their unfriendliness.]

[Subaru: Moving corpses huh. Sorry for not taking the fact that this world has magic seriously at all.]

Subaru actually had real experiences with magic. He shivers at Roswaal's examples and looks over the girl camp again with their anxious looking faces.

He saw no signs of the calm atmosphere during breakfast that had lasted about ten minutes. The reason for this was because of Subaru rashly bringing in the topic of Hollows, essentially breaking that calm atmosphere into mere fragments.

The atmosphere dissolves this way and the aftertaste was really bad. Thus—

[Subaru: —Alright, I have a proposal!]

Subaru kicks his chair, stands up, and thrusts his finger at the ceiling. This makes everyone open their eyes wide while Subaru spins around his held out arm.

[Subaru: Seems like there's some misunderstandings, however I did not bring up Hollows to scare you all. Understand that first.]

[Emilia: Then what was the talk about Kiku-san from Banchousarayashiki, Iwasan, and Renkon-san for?]

[Subaru: Hurry up and forgot about those things and the vegetable already. You got it all wrong. It's fiction!]

Emilia makes a relieved expression upon hearing that it was fiction. It was possible to still doubt if it would be okay, but for now she had a stance of intending to hear him out, so he took this opportunity.

[Beatrice: It's too late for that assessment, I suppose. The damage done by the Hollow talk is something that can no longer be resolved.]

[Subaru: I will replace that perception of yours that's smeared with prejudice, Beako. —through necromancy that is!]

[Emilia: Necromancy?]

Subaru raised a thumb at the scornful Beatrice, and then Emilia tilted her head at Subaru, who made his declaration with a loud voice. Emilia expresses a question mark at the unfamiliar word, making Subaru smile with distorted cheeks.

[Subaru: Yes, necromancy! At my home town it's a written technique used to take down spirits, and by spirits I mean ghost spirits! In other words, necromancy is a ritual to summon Hollows!]

[—!?!]

Upon hearing Subaru's astounding idea, everyone's expression changed simultaneously.

[Emilia: Summoning Hollows? You can do that?]

[Subaru: There are loopholes and underhanded tricks for everything. Emilia-tan, how about you think of this one thing as challenging it after you felt deceived?]

[Emilia: If I think of it that way, then that would mean I was deceived until the end!]

[Rem: Is it really okay to do that? Nothing bad will happen?]

Rem takes place of the disturbed Emilia as she rapidly took a step forward and drew closer to Subaru.

[Rem: It is typical for people to think of Hollows as evil existences. I do not want to doubt Subaru-kun, but if by any chance something.....]

[Subaru: Ho—hold up. The thing that people are scared of when it comes to Hollows and ghosts is their unfamiliarity with their nature, right? If they get dragged out by necromancy, you'll come to understand them and their scariness will be reduced by half.]

[Rem: Even if it's reduced by half, scary things are scary!]

It wasn't shown in Rem's face, but in truth, she may have gotten relatively frightened.

She gets close to the trembling Emilia and was propped up by her shoulder, but it seemed that Emilia was pretending to comfort her, being covered in her own helplessness.

[Beatrice: Fufumm, you say some useful things sometimes too, I suppose.]

[Subaru: Now that's some unexpected reinforcement. Are you in agreement with me, Beako?]

When Subaru becomes surprised from the very unexpected approval ballot, Beatrice snorted her nose with her arms crossed.

[Beatrice: I also have a lot of things I want to say to the Hollows now. If we summon those guys through necromancy, I'll hit them, I suppose.]

Beatrice was burning with ambition at the idea of necromancy with an expression full of hostility. Anyhow, it seemed like she wasn't seriously against them either, so he gave a final look at Roswaal.

The decision was in Roswaal's hands. He collectedly extended both of his hands in response to Subaru's look and

[Roswaal: Sounds good. Try and do it how you want to. To be honest, I'm also interested in the necromancy used to summon Hollows. I want to see this without fail, after all.]

[Subaru: Now you're talking! As expected of Ros-chi. You are reasonable!]

Subaru received the approval of the well understanding Head, as he became filled with delight seeing how Roswaal was understanding of his thoughts.

[Subaru: And with that, let's set up the preparations for necromancy! What's wrong? It's not that hard to makes preparations for it. We just need a big, white paper, a feather pen, and a coin.]

[Ram: Those are very cheap. It's counterfeiting.]

[Subaru: The cheap simpleness is the gimmick of instant necromancy. Back at my home town, it exploded with popularity before and it was all the rage.]

[Emilia: So Hollow played at Subaru's hometown, huh. You are reeaally brave.....]

Subaru gives a vague smile at Emilia, who was giving him strange admiration, and left out the details on the matter. If he were to talk about the details of the necromancy that became popular, Emilia would be frightened again.

Anyhow, only minor effects of this necromancy appeared. Then there was also a rumor which said that the practice had become prohibited, as marks were left on a good amount of boys and girls' hearts.

That ritual's name was called thus at his hometown:

[Subaru: From here, the Roswaal residence's first "Kokkuri-san" shall now commence!]

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—Kokkuri-san is something that exploded with popularity in Japan for a period of time. It is a kind of necromancy.

The influence of it was fierce. Even now, it is so popular that in one area it is even prohibited.

There is a theory that says Kokkuri parodizes the names of "foxes(kitsune)", "dogs(inu)" and "tanuki". People generally think that they are summoning low class animal spirits via ritual.

In Subaru's world it is an outdated game, but it is still generally common knowledge, and it is at least well known for people to know about the flow of the ritual's sequences, along with the tools one needs to prepare for it.

[Subaru: Simply speaking will not summon Kokkuri-san. This is because I need to make the preparations necessary to talk with Kokkuri-san.]

[Rem: So that's why you have paper and a pen? Are you going to communicate with Kokkuri-san through writing.....?]

Subaru was spreading white paper over the table when Rem, who had her morningstar in her hand, nervously asked this question.

Holding a weapon like this was something you wouldn't normally see on an average day at the mansion. In other words, it seemed that today was preparation for extraordinary battle to Rem. She had all the preparations set to turn Kokkuri-san into small fragments.

[Ram: That's an ugly "E" character. Feels like your daily studying hasn't been taking its effect.]

[Subaru: Shut up, Nee-sama. If you can read it, then that's all that matters.]

Subaru responds to the Ram out of wariness, whose abusive language was harsher than usual, and continued to write characters on the white paper while feeling discouraged. That was all of the E characters, in sequential order, to correspond with the hiragana in this world.

[Subaru: The last columns to prepare are the number column, the man column, and the woman column. And something that cannot be forgotten, the gate used to let Kokkuri-san go in and out.]

He methodically writes the e characters, the numbers 0 through 9, man and woman, and lastly the choices “yes” and “no” for preparation. Writing “Torii” during that time would mean that everything would be ready.

[Subaru: Emilia-tan, lend me some money.]

[Emilia: Okay. Don't waste it.]

[Puck: Kinda feels like something a man financially dependent on a woman would do.]

Subaru ignores the utterance from the scandalous Puck and put the gold coin Emilia gave to him on top of the Torii illustration. Then he nods at Rem and Emilia. The three people take their seats.

[Subaru: Before we begin, here are some important points to note. First off, the three of us will put our index fingers on the gold coin, but make sure you don't take it off until it's over. It wouldn't be pretty if you did.]

[Emilia: O—ok. Got it. Don't take off your finger huh.can I freeze it?]

[Subaru: It's not about physically sticking to it. Let's try doing it deliberately. Also, about the Hollow that will answer the questions we have for Kokkuri-san....they can be customarily loud. You will get scolded if you do

not follow the sequence properly. Please follow my instructions in the way that they have been told.]

[Rem: Scolded.....so that means that moment would be a good opportunity, huh. I feel like I understand what Subaru-kun is expecting of me.]

[Subaru: Feels like you don't get it, so I'm gonna tell you that there is a standard prohibition on attacks.]

Emilia was serious with a pale face. Rem had fighting spirit dwelling in her light blue eyes. These things made Subaru feel anxious.

However, around them there was Beatrice, who was full of hostility, and Ram, whose aggressive attitude was getting worse. Roswaal and Puck were the same as always, but it would probably wouldn't help keep his anxiety in check.

There was no reason for them to have this much willpower for carrying out the operation for Kokkuri-san in the first place, but—

[Subaru: A man's adventurous spirit is beyond help, precisely because of how he gets fired up in stupid times like these.....]

[Beatrice: Stop saying that stuff. Hurry up and get this started. Quickly I say, I suppose.]

Subaru looks like a fool with his cynical attitude. He pulls himself together and reaches out to the coin with his finger. Emilia and Rem follow. Their fingers pile on top of each other on the coin.

They start to feel a slight tension. The ritual begins while they all hold their breath—.

[Subaru: —Kokkuri-san, Kokkuri-san. Please come forth. If you are there, please move towards "yes".]

It was a magical chant. Subaru says the custom words for it with that type of enthusiasm.

Emilia and Rem felt power with their fingers caused by those words. However, there was no change with the coin. Subaru glares at the coin that didn't give even a slight movement, wets his dry lips, and tries once again.

[Subaru: —Kokkuri-san, Kokkuri-san. Please come forth. If you are there, please move towards “yes”.]

He says those words once again, but there was still no change.

This naturally relaxes the atmosphere in the hall. The participants Emilia and Rem give out a sigh of relief, and they heard a sigh from the back that sounded unamused. Beatrice was surely in a bad mood from this result, just because of her high expectations. —That's what he thought immediately afterwards.

[Emilia: —Ah!]

Emilia raises her voice in surprise. Rem widens her eyes and is at a loss for words. Subaru also held his breath.

They reacted like this because the coin they had their fingers on slowly moved towards yes.

[Subaru: P—please move back towards Torii.]

Subaru receives looks from those two as if they were appealing to him and clumsily remembered the next instruction. In response to the instruction, the coin moved from “yes” to the Torii position, making Subaru feel confident that the necromancy was a success.

The ghosts were doing deeds and there were influences on the participants' subconscious, but for now they had accomplished the first step.

[Subaru: A—alright, so it moved down. Kokkuri-san should answer most of our questions with it like this. Anything you guys would like to ask?]

[Emilia Su—subaru, you show us how it's done first.]

[Rem:Yes, I think we should go with that. I still can't see the Hollow.]

Emilia didn't hide her fright, while Rem had a misunderstanding about the ritual, as she thought it was to crush the ghosts.

Seeing as how they shut down their right to ask a question, after Subaru thought about it for a bit, he

[Subaru: —Kokkuri-san, Emilia-tan is afraid of Hollows, right?]

[Emilia: Subaru!?!]

Emilia raised a criticising voice, but the coin had already moved. The gold coin slides onto the “yes” spot, and Emilia's sentiments were made clear—though they were already obvious.

[Subaru: Thanks. Kokkuri-san, move back towards Torii.]

Subaru is satisfied with the result. When he requests for the Kokkuri to move back to its origin, he moves smoothly towards above the Torii illustration. This was the flow of sequences for Kokkuri-san.

[Subaru: So these are the basics of Kokkuri-san. Next we would do the question and answer session again so that we aren't rude to Kokkuri-san.....Emilia-tan, what's up with that look?]

[Emilia: I—I'm telling you I'm not scared. I think the answer to that question was a mistake. Subaru must have moved his finger. I won't be fooled.]

[Kokkuri: Nope.]

[Emilia: Hyan!?!]

Kokkuri-san crushed Emilia's cute willpower without mercy. Emilia, who let out a shriek, learned her place from his pointing out and let out a "Sorry....." with a faint voice.

[Rem: —Kokkuri-sama. Should we have meat or fish for today's dinner?]

[Kokkuri: Meat.]

Immediately after that, Rem, who was watching the flow of the game up until now, threw a question at Kokkuri-san with astounding courage. The border of the E character slips away. Rem gives her thanks to Kokkuri-san, who gave an answer for today's dinner, and then shifted her attention towards Subaru and the others.

[Rem: I believe Kokkuri-san has credibility with his answer. We have no fish for ingredients at the kitchen, so the dinner being a meat dish.....I am the only one who should know about that.]

[Emilia: Eh.....Then isn't this amazing?]

Emilia comprehends the intent behind Rem's question and uses her free hand to touch her mouth, exposing her astonishment. She blinks her eyes and stared firmly at the coin. Then

[Emilia: Kokkuri-san is amazing. I was surprised.]

[Kokkuri: Not particularly.]

[Emilia: Sorry for doubting you. Moreover, you've even been talking to us reeaally politely.]

[Kokkuri: A common thing.]

[Emilia: Is that so? A common thing.....but misunderstanding you is a very sorrowful thing to do, so I apologize. I'll be careful.]

[Kokkuri: No prob.]

[Subaru: Was Kokkuri-san really able to have such relaxed conversations!?!]

Kokkuri-san's behavior broke into a mess of pieces in response to Emilia, who reflected on her behavior.

When these things went down, the coin was sliding on the paper. The contrast between the pleasantness of the conversation and the impression given by the image gave quite the strange feeling.



Anyhow, it looked like Emilia had complete trust in Kokkuri-san, so her expression was different in comparison to how she was frightened by Hollow earlier. In some respects, Rem came face to face with the exchange of heart-warming foreign culture, so it seemed that her fighting spirit also settled down.

[Rem: Emilia-sama, can I talk to Kokkuri-san too?]

[Emilia: Ah, sorry. Kokkuri-san, can Rem talk to you too?]

[Kokkuri: Sure.]

[Subaru: He's suppose to answer with "Yes" there, not "Sure"!]

In regards to the ritual, Kokkuri-san was now a participant as a fourth viewpoint, rather than a guest of honor.

It differed quite a lot from what the image they had heard about from rumors, but perhaps the Kokkuri-san of this world was just like this. He was really different from Japan's Kokkuri-san, who is hard to deal with, according to rumors.

[Rem: Is Subaru-kun satisfied everyday with my cooking?]

[Kokkuri: Sounds right.]

[Rem: Does Subaru-kun enjoy his work at the mansion? Is it tough for him?]

[Kokkuri: A pleasantly tired feeling.]

[Rem: Is Subaru-kun getting along well with Nee-sama?]

[Kokkuri: Indifferent towards the antagonizing hate.]

[Rem: Is Subaru-kun.....]

[Subaru: Uh, Rem-san? Even if you don't ask Kokkuri-san, I can at least answer that kind of stuff if you ask me directly, you know?]

[Rem: No, asking you directly is embarrassing, so.....]

[Subaru: This method is indirect, but your questions sure aren't!]

He didn't understand Rem's point about her embarrassment, but it seemed that she had befitting merit to associate with Kokkuri-san. Nevertheless, perhaps you could say that the first stage had been completed with the apparent satisfaction of Rem's curiosity.

[Subaru: Alright then, it's regretful, but let's pray for his departure.
—Kokkuri-san, thank you. By all means, please go back home.]

[Emilia: Thank you. Let's speak again sometime.]

[Rem: I pray that nothing bad happens along the way home and that you return safely.]

Subaru was particular about his formality, while Emilia and Rem entered a stance for an extreme farewell. They all bid their goodbyes, and the coin swiftly headed towards the Torii. And then, the feeling of oppression that vaguely drifted about in the hall vanishes, which made everyone understand that Kokkuri-san had gone home.

[Subaru: And that's how it is. How was it? Kokkuri-san wasn't a scary Hollow, right?]

[Rem: Yeah, that surprised me. I couldn't see him, and yet he really was there. Could it be that spirits are.....but it didn't seem like it.....]

[Roswaal: There was no mana interference from what I saw. It feels like I saw the amazingness of necromancy, though it was mysterious.]

Roswaal, the person who had been silent up until now, makes sure of the ritual's ending as he nods his head in admiration. The leading person for magic applies his metaphorical seal of approval . Subaru was also proud of Kokkuri-san, as if it was something personal.

[Puck: Looks like it wasn't a deed of a spirit. If it was a spirit, Volakia would notice it. How'd you feel about it, Betty?]

[Beatrice:I won't acknowledge it. The existence of Hollows, in and of itself, is something blasphemous to spirits, I suppose.]

[Puck: Betty?]

Beatrice responds to Puck's questioning with a quite, indignant voice. That response causes Puck to widen his eyes, as Beatrice compromises at the table with her arm waving "bye-bye!".

[Beatrice: I will take your spot, young sister. I will expose the bogus trickery that happened just now, I suppose.]

[Ram: Wait Beatrice, what are you saying? There was no bogus trickery anywhere.]

[Subaru: You don't really hear bogus nowadays, huh.....putting that aside, do you doubt the Kokkuri-san that you saw? If so, then how do you explain what just happened earlier?]

[Beatrice: Listen up, you be quiet now. Or are you scared of me exposing the truth of the matter? If you are, then I guess that can't be helped either, I suppose.]

[Subaru:The rice cake is ready. You'll pay for this, Drill Loli.]

Rem gives her seat up to Beatrice. Subaru also once again sinks into his chair. Beatrice sees this and then glares at Emilia.

[Beatrice: You too. Change places with Nii-cha, I suppose. There's no way there are people that side with Kokkuri. The two of us, me and Nii-cha, will make these lies clear, I suppose.]

[Subaru: What suspicions do you have for the people that side with Kokkuri? Also how will Puck participate in this?]

[Puck: How about with my tail?]

[Subaru:Ah! I understand. That's fine. Let's do it with your tail.]

Puck, who came flying, floats above the table, and holds out his long tail as he puts it on the coin. Subaru and Beatrice also follow, and the arrangements to start were put in order, though they were awkward.

[Emilia: Subaru.....]

[Subaru: It'll be fine, Emilia-tan. Look. I will protect Kokkuri-san—]

[Emilia: Okay, I believe you.]

Emilia puts her hands on her chest and gives a nod to Subaru with a gesture that seemed to be a prayer. He makes sure of it and then when he

takes a deep breath, he directs his consciousness towards the Torii drawn on the paper.

[Subaru: —Kokkuri-san, Kokkuri-san. I apologize for continuing this, but if you are there, please move towards the “Yes” spo—that was fast.]

[Kokkuri: You call me too much.]

[Subaru: True. Of course you’d get mad. Being summoned immediately after returning would of course make you mad. My apologies.]

Subaru prostrates himself in response to the faint displeasure hinted in Kokkuri’s sentence. However, the two people who were having their first experience with Kokkuri-san widen their eyes in response to the slight surprise.

[Puck: At the very least, I am not moving. How about you, Betty?]

[Beatrice:I also have not done that shameless thing, I suppose. Even if I was and if I wanted to, I would just pulverize him]

[Kokkuri: Absurd.]

[Puck: He’s speaking, Beako.]

[Beatrice: This is shameless!]

In any case, you could say that this was a win for the Kokkuri side against the beginning hostilities.

Kokkuri-san moved with a “Bring it on” and waited for a question. It seemed that his anger from being summoned in succession had been assuaged. While this happened, the coin slipped swiftly across the paper. Kokkuri-san truly was uncalm.

[Subaru: There. Go ahead and ask a question, Beako. Go fight him.]

[Beatrice: I'll show people how you disappear, I suppose.]

[Subaru: Just how rude can you be at the start!? Expecting him to pop out without even having called him in response to being prompted to ask a question is just like the PC dolphin!]

[Kokkuri: Wonder what I should do~]

[Subaru: But wow Kokkuri-san, you are a major sadist towards Beako!]

Kokkuri-san enters a strong counter in response to Beako, who should have had challenged him first. Even Kokkuri-san saw through the reddened Beatrice's natural groping.

[Puck: Alright, what does Lia think of me?]

[Kokkuri: A hard working younger brother.] [Kokkuri: Sometimes a mother.]

[Puck: Fufufu, this is amusing. Alright, what do I think of Emilia?]

[Kokkuri: A cute, hard working daughter.] [Kokkuri: Sometimes a mother.]

[Subaru: You two think of each other as a mother sometimes?]

Puck let out profound laughter, while Emilia frantically shook her head and denied it. This was also a parent-child relationship he didn't understand, but it confirmed Kokkuri-san's insight.

[Beatrice: Fufumm. If that's the case, then tell me what Nii-chan thinks of me, I suppose.]

[Kokkuri: Honorific]

[Beatrice: —? Honorable? What is the meaning of this? He thinks I'm honorable.....?]

[Kokkuri: Say honorific.]

[Beatrice: Why has this guy only been awfully strict towards me?]

Whether he had completely ruined her mood or pleased her, Kokkuri-san was skilled at hitting the right areas. Afterwards, he skillfully dodged Beatrice's question too. This little girl was that furious, and yet she became completely dispirited.

Anyhow, it was unlikely for Beatrice to doubt Kokkuri-san's existence now that she had argued with him until now. In some way, her goal had been accomplished. Thus, it was about the time to wish for Kokkuri-san to go back home and—

[Rem: Ah, Subaru-kun. Can I do one last thing?]

[Subaru: Hm? Oh, Rem wants to ask something too?]

Subaru ponders about her actions, as Rem holds her hand up, responding to Subaru with a "Yes". Standardly, only the participants would be able to ask Kokkuri-san questions. Perhaps this would anger Kokkuri-san.

[Kokkuri: Come at me.]

[Subaru: Kokkuri-san is a handsome man who is anything but angry. It's fine, Rem. Go ask a question.]

[Rem: Then I will take up that offer. —To tell you the truth, lately the amount of stored mayonnaise has been decreasing over night. What is the cause of that?]

That was the moment the unconcerned Rem threw in her question. The coin lodged with Kokkuri-san in it that had been sliding casually until now stops its movement. The coin that suspended on top of the Torii illustration shakes the situation of Subaru and the others having their fingers placed on it. It was more than a slight movement.

[——]

These three hold their breath and glare at each other as Emilia and the others become disturbed from the situation.

—Thus, the story was coming back to the beginning.

4

While putting all their strength into the coin they touched, the three cautiously peeped at each other's attitude.

The cold sensation felt at their fingertips was an indication that it would face towards “correct” and would start to move. However, it was impossible this time for it to recite “correct”.

The Roswaal residence's preserved mayonnaise was being revived in this world by Subaru and the others, who were mayonnaise lovers. It was being done through Rem's everyday earnest inclusion of the produced flavor.

The quality was inferior compared to the type of quality back at Subaru's original world, but it was an absolute must for his eating habits.

There were people who snuck bites of that mayonnaise every night. —To be completely honest, that was Subaru's doing. Occasionally he wouldn't be able to hold himself back and would creep into the kitchen at midnight,

snatching the mayonnaise. However, it was impossible for him to be found out.

[Subaru: Force is entering your shoulder, Beako. Puck you too; what's up with the swelling of power with your tail?]

[Beatrice: You too. Your cheeks are stiffening. Even under normal circumstances your excessive smile is atrocious, I suppose. Kokkuri-san also is ugly. No doubt about it.]

[Puck: Come on you two. We can still talk this out as of right now. Let's stop this foolishness and have more constructivity, shall we? Look, we can even go out and have a picnic.]

They were restraining each other, but would still not loosen their power put into the coin.

Subaru was putting in power to avoid having the truth exposed, but they were desperate to destroy his obstruction. At this rate, he will become a criminal—

[Emilia: Ah, the coin.....!]

Emilia was there watching over them. While trembling, she tried to watch the coin that started to move. However, the coin's speed was slow. The movement was so dull that it seemed it would tear apart the paper lying underneath it. The E characters the gold coin slowly traced were “be”, “a”, “and “to”. —Of course, Subaru was moving it.

He put a false accusation on her before he was exposed, making the situation indefinite. He had no choice.

[Subaru: Ohhtoh, if we go by this flow, then the criminal appears to be....]

[Beatrice: Do—don't play games! Take a closer look, I suppose.....!]

When she spoke out to the shameless Subaru, the resisting Beatrice's fingers shone vividly. Immediately after, the wind spirals the girl's name in the middle, and Subaru notices the increase of strength on the coin.

[Subaru: You, no way.....!]

[Beatrice: See, take a good look. This movement clearly shows your.....]

Just like Beatrice said, the coin changed its course, turning the "ri" into "su", following with "ba". There was no doubt that she was using some sort of magic just for this purpose.

[Emilia: Be a to su ba?]

Emilia reads the E characters just like how they appeared and was bewildered. But, it would be problematic like this. If the name finishes in a straight line next, Subaru's crime would be as clear as day.

[Subaru: But with this you've already burnt Kokkuri-san's grey brain cells!]

[Beatrice: Th—this? No way, I suppose.....!]

Just before it narrowly reached "ru", somehow it slid over and hit "pa" and "tsu". If it reached the straight line at this rate, the conclusion would be decided.

[Emilia: Be a to su ba pa tsu?]

[Subaru: With this, next will I will show you Finishing Kokkuri!]

[Puck: I won't allow it, Subaru! This is where I will show you, a person who showed negligence, Counter Kokkuri!]

[Beatrice: I will cooperate with Nii-cha, I suppose! With the two of us, it will be Intimate Kokkuri!]

They take a stab at Subaru's opportunity, who rushed the match, as Puck once again slips the coin towards "su". Beatrice also backs up that force, as Subaru is cornered into fighting defensively.

At this rate, he will be defeated. —This was the moment he thought that.

[Kokkuri: Cut it out.]

[—]

The coin that the three of them had put their strength into rotates at high speed, and then not only Subaru, but Beatrice and Puck too repel from the table. The coin that was released from their physical strength grows wild and traces characters to scold the three people who ridiculed him.

[Kokkuri: A child mourning at your unsightly quarrel is here.]

[Subaru: A—a mourning child.....?]

[Kokkuri: Emilia]

Subaru is surprised by Kokkuri-san's answer and turns around. He saw Emilia standing there, who was watching the three of them with sorrowful eyes. She had her arms on her chest. Perhaps she was praying.

Kokkuri-san noticed how the three people who shoved their crimes into each other's faces despaired.

[Kokkuri: Remember it.] [Kokkuri: The loving heart.] [Kokkuri: The kindness.] [Kokkuri: The love.]

[Emilia: Ko—kokkuri-san. You.....]

[Kokkuri: I am no longer needed.] [Kokkuri: What's next is] [Kokkuri: Your guys' story.]

Subaru could not speak in response to Kokkuri-san's concern. Kokkuri-san leaves those last words and then heads toward Torii. There was no time to stop him. The atmosphere changes.

[Rem:Looks like Kokkuri-san went home.]

The feeling of his presence fades away. Rem puts the reality that everyone understood into words. When she touched the paper left behind on the table, she put her hand on the Torii and gold coin.

[Rem: I am sorry. I said something unnecessary and angered Kokkuri-san.]

[Subaru: N—no. Rem, it's not your fault. It was my fault for bringing up Kokkuri rashly in the first place. It must've been a bother to Kokkuri-san too.]

He was surprised from Kokkuri-san's excessive friendliness, but just from that, he had feelings of guilt.

Thus, there was only one way to show his regret.

[Subaru: Rem, about the mayonnaise...]

[Rem: Yes. In the end, we never found out who the criminal was, but.....]

[Subaru: Um, that's wrong. The criminal is.....]

Subaru looked straight into Rem's eyes and bowed in shame. Then—

[Subaru: I am the criminal.] [Puck: I did it.] [Beatrice: I was just provoked by a demon, I suppose.]

[Rem: What?]

The three of their voice's overlap. Rem, who had confessed with them, widens her eyes. However, the people that were the most surprised were none other than those three. They exchange glances at each other's faces and opened their mouths in dumbfoundment.

Emilia saw that situation, but she lastly pinches the gold coin and

[Emilia: Kokkuri-san, Kokkuri-san. Could it be that you knew everything?]

Then, she asked this question to the silent coin with a small smile on her face.

5

[Ram: —What a farce that was huh, Roswaal-sama.]

They decided to check the hall where the mayonnaise incident criminals were writing their earnest apologies later. Ram speaks out to the person walking in front of her, Roswaal. He then shakes his shoulder, laughs, and

[Roswaal: Wasn't it quite the enjoyable show? Subaru-kun is really amusing. I don't get tired of him. Splendid. Just splendid.]

[Ram: Don't warm up to Barusu that much. Even now he is doing something outrageous.]

[Roswaal: "That was just me having fun again"...if I said that, I wonder if you would get mad.]

In response to the jolly Head's words, Ram let out a slight sigh without objection.

From the beginning, Ram would never oppose Roswaal's opinion. Pouring her whole soul into meeting the head's wishes certainly was her loyalty. Thus—

[Ram: How did you move that coin?]

[Roswaal: Through the use of wind and earth magic. I scattered mana through wind, deceiving them, and guided the coin through local impact. It seemed that Beatrice and the big spirit noticed it and then disregarded it.]

The shy Roswaal's answer causes Ram to be reminded of the two people who seemed to be accomplices. These accomplices were the gleeful kitten, and the seemingly indifferent little girl who accompanied him.

[Ram: Putting that aside, I had an uncomfortable feeling just about the last interaction. The big spirit and Beatrice were both digging their own graves.]

[Roswaal: It was an unexpected development after all. At any rate, the last thing was the only thing I didn't understand as well.]

[Ram: Huh?]

[Roswaal: I didn't understand how not everything was our game. Also, there was no mana interference at that time. Well well, what did Subaru-kun call it. Hm.]

Roswaal winks at Ram, who took in his statement in dumbfoundment. Whether it had been his way of joking, or if he was seriously enjoying himself with the mystery, even Ram herself could not read between the lines.

It would be fine if it was all Roswaal's trick. —However, if by any chance it wasn't...

[Ram: From now on, having that ritual at the mansion....let's prohibit people from playing Kokkuri-san. Yes.]

She nods intensely and clearly make that decision in her heart.

Thus, the "Kokkuri-san" game that entered into this different world became taboo, just like in his previous world. Or at the very least, it would never be played again at the Roswaal residence.

Furthermore, the way it became summon "Emilia-sama" instead was a whole different story.

